



State of Connecticut

SENATE

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Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and distinguished members of the Education Committee,

I am State Senator Michael McLachlan, and I am here today to speak in support of two bills before you: *House Bill 5357, An Act Concerning a Deaf Child Bill of Rights* and *Senate Bill 299, An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes*.

House Bill 5357 would require that the individualized education program for a child who is deaf or hearing impaired to include a language and communication plan. This plan will address several important components, including the child's chosen primary language or communication mode, available peers and role models for that mode, educational options available for that student. Additionally, it will ensure qualifications of all teachers instructing that child, make all instruction and activities accessible to that child, and provide assistive devices and services when required.

It is important that regardless of a child's abilities we are providing them with options to succeed in their education. This bill does that. It provides a minimum of what our schools have to do in order to provide a base education for the deaf or hearing impaired. This base will allow every child to succeed in the same capacity as their peers. We are providing an even educational playing field for all.

Senate Bill 299 makes minor revisions to the education statutes relating to the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) instructors. It creates a credential and permit for the certification of JROTC instructors that creates permanence in the accreditation that will ensure that JROTC programs are striving in Connecticut.

There are JROTC programs at both Danbury and Bethel High Schools. I have seen first hand the benefits that such a program can provide for the students in it. With these programs we have provided yet another unique educational experience for our students. I have a vested interest in assuring that our students continue to have all the education experiences that can be awarded to them.

I urge the committee to support both of these very important pieces of legislation in order to ensure that the students of Connecticut the best education that we can.

Thank you.